



NAVAL STATION INGLESIDE

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Mine warfare ships deploy to West Coast

INGLESIDE, Texas -- Two mine countermeasures ships will depart Naval Station Ingleside Friday, April 1, for a five-month deployment that will take them through the Panama Canal to the Pacific Ocean and U.S. West Coast.

USS Devastator (MCM 6) and USS Scout (MCM 8) will participate in a number of exercises during the deployment including Exercise Lead Shield, which will involve freeing a port that has been mined by a fictitious terrorist group. During this exercise, Mine Warfare ships and Sailors will work hand-in-hand with members of Homeland Security, various intelligence and security agencies, U.S. Coast Guard, amphibious ships and a carrier group. Capt. Robert Riehl, Commander, Mine Countermeasures One, based in Ingleside, will spearhead mine warfare efforts during the exercise.

In addition to participating in a number of training exercises, the nearly 180 Sailors aboard the two MCMs will enjoy port visits along the West Coast.

The two Avenger Class ships are designed as a mine hunter-killer capable of finding, classifying and destroying moored and bottom mines. The 224-foot, 1,300-ton mine countermeasures ships are equipped with high definition, variable-depth sonar, and a remotely operated robotic submarine used to neutralize mines. It is also capable of conventional mine sweeping measures. The ship has a fiberglass-sheathed, wooden hull and is armed with two .50 caliber machine guns.